NEW YORK CITY COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY

The City University of New York

School of Arts & Sciences

Department of Social Science, N611

718-260-5080

Course code: SOC 2401 Instructor: Joseph Smith

Course title: Society, Technology and Self Faculty email:

Class hours/credits: 3 class hours, 3 credits Office Hrs:

Meeting times:

Syllabus

**Prerequisite: SOC 1101**

**Pathways: Individual and Society**

## **Catalog Description:** This course analyzes the social relationship between society, technology and self from a sociological perspective. The emphasis of this course is on technology as the principal form of social interaction, and as a determinant of the reconstitution of the character and personality structures.

SOC 2401ID is an interdisciplinary courses covering readings from different disciplines, including history, psychology, and neuroscience. It will feature three to four guest lectures from different fields during the in-class meetings. It aims to introduce students to different perspectives related to the social dimensions of technology use.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Lee Rainie and Barry Wellman, *Networked: The New Social Operating System*, MIT Press.

Paper copy on reserve [HM741 .R35 2012, HM741 R157n 2012]. Available in electronic format.

Rich Ling, *New Tech, New Ties: How Mobile Communication is Reshaping Social Cohesion*, MIT Press. Paper copy on reserve. [HE9713 .M43 2008]. Available in electronic format.

Michael Mandiberg (editor), *The Social Media Reader*, New York University Press.

FILMS:

Black Code: Big Data Meets Big Brother (2017)

Digital Nation

*This course fulfills the LAA/LAS Associate Capstone requirement, though it can also be taken for other requirements and electives. The City Tech LAA/LAS Associate Capstone is designed for students entering their second year in the program. LAA/LAS Associate Capstone courses are meant to prepare students to continue their studies in a bachelor's degree, third-year, or junior, level. In addition, Associate Capstone courses are meant to help students develop an awareness of the importance of knowledge, values and skills developed in general education courses; and to integrate this knowledge, these values and these skills into their advanced academic study and professional careers. Please ask the instructor if you have any questions about what the LAA/LAS Associate Capstone requirement entails.*

**Interdisciplinary Course Learning Outcomes and Assessment Methods**

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| **LEARNING OUTCOMES** | **ASSESSMENT METHODS** |
| 1. Purposefully connect and integrate across-discipline knowledge and skills to solve problems | Combination of exams, lectures, and discussions. |
| 2. Synthesize and transfer knowledge across disciplinary boundaries | Combination of exams, lectures, and discussions. |

### Course Intended Learning Outcomes

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| **LEARNING OUTCOMES** | **ASSESSMENT METHODS** |
| 1. Demonstrate an understanding of the social conditions shaping the development of selves in the context of the scientific and technological advancement | Exams, essays, in-class discussions, small group workshops, and oral presentations focusing on the examples related to the theoretical concepts introduced in readings and lectures. |
| 2. Demonstrate an understanding of the impact of technology and technological change on societies | Combination of multiple-choice and essay questions in exams, in-class discussions, and questions discussed in a small group setting. |
| 3. Demonstrate an understanding of the ethical questions raised by modern technologies | Exams, quizzes, in-class discussions, small group work, and essays. |
| 4. Demonstrate an understanding of how and why societies regulate technologies and their use and development | Exams, essays, quizzes, in-class discussions, small group work. |
| 5. Demonstrate an understanding of the impact of technological development on social relations, economic opportunities, and inequalities | Combination of multiple-choice and essay questions in exams, essays, relevant in-class writing assignments and discussions, small group work. |
| 6. Demonstrate an understanding of the social organization of work involving technologies | In-class discussions and small group work, oral presentations, written essay assignments |

**General Education Learning Outcomes/Assessment Methods**

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| LEARNING OUTCOMES | ASSESSMENT METHODS |
| KNOWLEDGE: Develop an understanding of the concepts and theories deployed by sociologists in their analysis of the social factors underlying the use and evolution of technology. | Quizzes, exams, essays, in-class discussions, and oral presentations. |
| SKILLS: Develop and use the tools needed for communication, inquiry, analysis and productive work. | Combination of class discussions, oral presentations, in-class small group work, essays, and exams. |
| INTEGRATION: Work productively within and across disciplines. | Quizzes, exams, essays, class discussions, and in-class small group work that draws on various resources in sociology and other disciplines. |
| VALUES, ETHICS, AND RELATIONSHIP: Understand and apply values, ethics, and diverse perspectives in personal, civic, and cultural/global domains. | Combination of class discussions, oral presentations, in-class small group work, and essays that engage directly with the questions about values, ethics, responsibility, and diversity. |

**Scope of Assignments and Other Course Requirements**

Exams include multiple-choice and short answer questions; participation in-class discussions; independent research.

**Final Grade Distribution:**

**Two exams, each 25% of final grade**

Exams will include multiple choice questions and short written responses. No make up tests without either prior notification that you will be absent the day of the test, or a doctor's note explaining your absence.

**Time diary: 20% of final grade**

You will keep a diary of your use of digital technology as you move through your day. The aim is to get a more nuanced sense of how the new technologies become integrated in the everyday routines of our lives, how they change the way we negotiate daily life, and to explore the issues that arise (at home, at work, at school) from technological changes. [Length: minimum of 5 pages]

**Observation work: 20% of final grade**

This project will explore mobile devices and social interaction. Before undertaking this assignment we will strategize different ways we can test (a) the degree to which mobile devices wall us off from the world around us (b) the way in which people negotiate public spaces while using their mobile phones, and (c) mobile devices as props that support (or hinder) co-present social interaction. Students will research these questions through observation of mobile phone use in public spaces. [Length: minimum of 5 pages]

**Participation: 10% of final grade**

Participation includes being present**,** participation in class discussion of readings and research assignments.

**Academic Integrity Policy**

Students and all others who work with information, ideas, texts, images, music, inventions, and other intellectual property owe their audience and sources accuracy and honesty in using, crediting, and citing sources. As a community of intellectual and professional workers, the College recognizes its responsibility for providing instruction in information literacy and academic integrity, offering models of good practice, and responding vigilantly and appropriately to infractions of academic integrity. Accordingly, academic dishonesty is prohibited in The City University of New York and at New York City College of Technology and is punishable by penalties, including failing grades, suspension, and expulsion. The complete text of the College policy on Academic Integrity may be found in the catalog.

**Attendance Policy**

Being late or missing lectures may impact your class participation grade.

**GRADING**

Grade Numerical Grade Quality Grade Numerical Grade Quality

Ranges Points Ranges Points

A 93 and above 4.0 C+ 77-79.9 2.3

A- 90-92.9 3.7 C 70-76.9 2.0

B+ 87-89.9 3.3 D 60-69.9 1.0

B 83-86.9 3.0 F 59.9 and below 0.0

B- 80-82.9 2.7 WF withdrew, failing 0.0

C+ 77-79.9 2.3 WU attended at least once, stopped

attending, didn't withdraw 0.0

**Course Calendar**

Session 1:

* Introduction

Session 2: Guest lecture:

* Peter Parides: Technological change in the 20th century
* Reading tba

Session 3: Social networks

* The Social Network Revolution (Wellman, Rainie Chaps 2)

Session 4: The digital tech revolutions

* The Internet Revolution and Mobile Revolutions (Wellman, Rainie Chaps 3,4)
* **Time diaries due**

Session 5: Guest lecture

* Tina Kao: Psychological and neurobiological foundations of personality structures and how technology shapes the constitution of the character and personality traits.
* Reading tba

Session 6: Networked

* Networked Relationships, Networked Families (Wellman, Raine Chaps 5, 6)
* Dana Boyd: Participating in the Always-on Lifestyle (Mandiberg)

Session 7:

* Film: Digital Nation
* Review

Session 8: Midterm

Session 9:

* Networked Creators (Wellman, Raine Chap 8)
  + Video: Clay Shirky: Cognitive Surplus
* Gabriella Coleman: Phreaks, Hackers, and Trolls: The Politics of Transgression and Spectacle (Mandiberg)

Session 10:

* Networked Information (Wellman, Raine Chap 9)
* Film: Black Code (documentary on government surveillance online and movement activism)

Session 11: How mobile phones reshape social cohesion

* Durkheim, Goffman, and Collins on ritual interaction (Ling Chaps 3-5)

Session 12:

* Mobile devices, co-present interaction, and mediated ritual communication
* Recalibrating social cohesion (Ling: Chaps 7, 8, 10)

Session 13: Guest lecture

* Tina Kao: Digital technology, learning and physical (dis)abilities
* Reading tba

Session 14

* Observation work due
* Review

Session 15:

* Observation work returned to students
* Final exam